

30 June 2017

Original: English

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**11<sup>th</sup> United Nations Conference on the  
Standardization of Geographical Names**

New York, 8 -17 August 2017

Item 9 of the provisional agenda\*

**National standardization**

**Toponymic Guidelines for Map and Other Editors for Malaysia,  
For International Use**

Submitted by Malaysia\*\*

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\* E/CONF.105/1

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TOPONYMIC GUIDELINES FOR MAP AND OTHER EDITORS FOR MALAYSIA, FOR  
INTERNATIONAL USE

**SUMMARY**

**(Submission for part of UNCSGN agenda)**

As the outcome of last meeting of the UNCSGN in 2012, delegation from Malaysia was given the opportunity and was officially requested to embark into the preparation of Toponymic Guideline for Map and Others Editors for Malaysia to be used by international members. Since 2013 the guideline was drafted, discussed and edited in the context of Malaysian National Committee on Geographical Names and was sent to the UNGEGN Coordinator for Toponymic Guideline for Map and Others Editors, namely Hubert Bergmann from Austria who became Coordinator until 2014. The document was then reviewed and checked by Gerhard Rampl, the current Coordinator who then finally accepted the document in 2016 and agreed that it be tabled in the UNCSGN this year for publication in the UN database.

The consistency of usage of proper names for places is a key element in effective communication throughout the world. As such, it is hoped that the publication of this Toponymic Guidelines for Map and Other Editors for International Use will help international users understand the methodology used for determining geographical names, language forms, pronunciation, dialects, etc. as practiced in Malaysia. Malaysia is a multi-ethnic country with a total population estimated at 30 million for 2014. The Malay language is the national and official language of Malaysia as stipulated in Article 152 of the Federal Constitution and the National Language Act of 1963/1967. The Malay language is widely spoken not only by the Malays but also by the other communities in Malaysia.

Apart from the language practice and history of the language, the document discusses spelling and pronunciation with emphasis on two main different writing systems, that is Roman and Jawi. The formal pronunciation of geographical names in Malay is based on standard Malay pronunciation, i.e. the phonetic symbols and syllables as well as function in the sentence. The Malay language has many dialects, depending on the area. In general, Malay dialect consists of spoken styles concurring to areas in Peninsular Malaysia and in Sabah and Sarawak. Dialect issues were outlined in detail in the document according to 14 States in Malaysia.

In term of the authority that is responsible for the geographical naming and standardization, the National Committee on Geographical Names (NCGN) was established on 11 September 2002 in accordance with the decision of the Cabinet to co-ordinate geographical name determination activities in Malaysia. Malaysia has published Guidelines for the Determination of Geographical Names for the state authorities to co-ordinate the activities of determining geographical names in Malaysia. The guidelines have been used as the Malaysian Standard MS 2256: 2009 entitled, “Geographic Information – Guidelines for the Determination of Geographical Names”.

In terms of geography, Malaysia consists of two (2) regions, namely Peninsular Malaysia and East Malaysia on the island of Borneo, separated by the South China Sea. Administratively Malaysia consists of thirteen (13) states and three (3) federal territories, i.e. eleven (11) states and two (2) federal territories in Peninsular Malaysia and two (2) states and one (1) federal territory in East Malaysia. Since Malaysia is a federation, state administration is governed by the state government, while the federal territories are governed by the federal government.

The main sources for geographical names are topographic maps published by the Department of Survey and Mapping of Malaysia ([www.jupem.gov.my](http://www.jupem.gov.my)). The 1:25 000 scale topographic maps are used for

Peninsular Malaysia and the 1:50 000 and 1:25 000 scale topographic maps are used for Sabah and Sarawak respectively. Apart from topographic maps, city maps with a larger scale of 1:5 000 or 1:10 000 are also used to obtain more detailed information. The map of Malaysia is available at the following link: [www.jupem.gov.my/toponymicMap.pdf](http://www.jupem.gov.my/toponymicMap.pdf).

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